



Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilot

East Palo Alto, CA

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Between 1995 and 1996, EPA funded 76 National and Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. EPA is funding more than 27 Pilots in 1997. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

OVERVIEW

EPA Region 9 has selected the City of East Palo Alto as a Regional Brownfields Pilot. The Region has joined with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide assistance to the city.

East Palo Alto has an ethnically diverse population of approximately 25,000 within a 2.5 square mile area. According to the 1990 census, community residents are 86% minority, including African Americans, Latinos, Pacific Islanders, and Asians. Incorporated in 1983, the city inherited an area with inadequate infrastructure, low sales and property tax revenues, no central business district, and the 130-acre Ravenswood Industrial Area. The Ravenswood area overlooks wetlands and the San Francisco Bay, and is located at the gateway to technology-based Silicon Valley, making it an attractive location for local industries. Redevelopment has been hampered by the perception of widespread contamination.

EPA completed a Phase II site investigation in December 1996, which showed that contamination was far less than originally expected. Pilot activities will include further assessment of properties within the Ravenswood Industrial Area.

PILOT SNAPSHOT



East Palo Alto, California

Date of Award:
April 1997

Amount: \$125,000

Site Profile: The pilot will target the 130-acre Ravenswood Industrial Area, made up of 59 properties and used for agricultural, residential, commercial, and industrial activities.

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Visit the EPA Brownfields Website at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>

OBJECTIVES

The EPA pilot is focused on completing site assessment efforts in the targeted area and beginning remediation planning. East Palo Alto's goals are to redevelop a large portion of the 130-acre Ravenswood complex, create new job opportunities for residents, and increase the city's tax base to improve community services. EPA and HUD have teamed together to assist the city by providing a federal staff liaison to work on brownfields and economic development issues, coordinate federal and state programs to meet the needs of East Palo Alto, and identify assistance programs for which the city qualifies. EPA also is assisting the city in community environmental education and convening a Ravenswood Industrial Area Stakeholders Group, which will make land-use recommendations and identify a process for implementation of the redevelopment plan.

ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of this pilot include:

- Working with the California Regional Water Quality Control Board (CalEPA) to conduct a screening-level investigation of soil and groundwater contamination;
- Determining the extent of soil and groundwater pollution, and identifying areas where more comprehensive studies may need to be conducted;
- Establishing a Ravenswood Industrial Area Stakeholders Group to determine future land uses with assistance from EPA and HUD;
- Conducting outreach activities to attract businesses to the area; and
- Conducting community outreach and education meetings to inform residents of the results of EPA investigations.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.